



*Improving the Lives of Older Adults and People with Disabilities  
Through Services, Research, and Education*

**State Unit on Aging Directors Letter #01-2023**

TO: State Unit on Aging Directors  
FROM: Alison Barkoff  
Acting Administrator/Assistant Secretary for Aging  
DATE: March 31, 2023  
SUBJECT: State Plan Guidance Equity Complement

**Background and Purpose**

The Administration for Community Living's (ACL) Administration on Aging (AoA) provided updated [State Plan Guidance in 2021](#) to align with the 2020 Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization. The updated guidance provides requirements and recommendations for continued inclusion and to advance support around equity in state plans. It outlines provisions under the OAA reauthorization (OAA Sections 307(a)(30)(A) and 307 (a)(30)(C)) which includes determining services needed and effectiveness of programs for specific older minority individuals<sup>1</sup>. This provision aligns with the Biden-Harris administration's Executive Order (E.O.) 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government<sup>2</sup> and Executive Order 14091, Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, issued February 16, 2023<sup>3</sup>.

The Older Americans Act programs require funding be targeted for those with the "greatest social need" and E.O. 13985 requires each Federal government agency to assess its programs and policies, then ensure they deliver resources and benefits equitably to all.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 In 2019, ACL/AoA funded via Title IV the National Resource Centers on Native American Elders which provides research and technical information on health, long-term services and supports, elder abuse, mental health, and other issues relevant to older Native Americans as well as National Minority Aging Organizations Technical Assistance Centers that provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information on health promotion and disease prevention for Asian-Pacific American, Native American, Hispanic, and African-American older individuals, and older lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. See "Older Americans Act: Overview and Funding," updated April 22,2020, available at: [https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20200422\\_R43414\\_8da38be015ac48bc094fd22d8baf9b8c00e21f34.pdf](https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20200422_R43414_8da38be015ac48bc094fd22d8baf9b8c00e21f34.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>

<sup>3</sup> Executive Order On Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/02/22/2023-03779/further-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal>

As defined in *Sec. 2 of the E.O. 13985 Definitions*. For purposes of this order:

- *The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.*
- *The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.”*

State Plans must address activities for how the state or territory will equitably provide services and supports to underserved communities by setting goals and providing assurances. This State Plan Guidance Complement provides technical assistance resources to State Units on Aging (SUA) and their network and provides examples of how SUAs may address the equity areas in their State Plans

**Examples of how SUAs may address the Equity Areas in their State Plans and Resources**

Areas to address	Resources available
<p>Determining services needed and effectiveness of programs, policies and services for older Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, older Native Americans, older Hispanic Americans, older African Americans, and older lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons</p>	<p><a href="#">Leading Practices to Advance Equity and Support of Underserved Communities throughout Health and Human Services Programs</a></p> <p><a href="#">Equity Analysis Tool: National Center for Law and Elder Rights Capacity Building Module</a></p> <p><a href="#">Older Adults' Equity Collaborative</a></p> <p>Examples of how SUAs have addressed in State Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inviting individuals of the targeted populations and entities that serve them to participate in focus groups, surveys, and public hearings and using data collected to inform the goals, objectives and strategies of the state/territories’ state plan</li> <li>• Reviewing service data to see if populations are effectively receiving services in proportion to Census data and setting goals to</li> </ul>

	<p>replicate successes and address areas for improvement based on that data</p>
<p>Engagement in outreach to older Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, older Native Americans, older Hispanic Americans, older African Americans, and older lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons</p>	<p><a href="#">Older African Americans</a></p> <p><a href="#">Older Hispanic Americans</a></p> <p><a href="#">Older Native Americans</a></p> <p><a href="#">Older Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders</a></p> <p><a href="#">Older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) persons</a></p> <p><a href="#">Persons with disabilities:</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Centers for Independent Living (CILs)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Protection &amp; Advocacy programs</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDDs)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">State Councils on Developmental Disabilities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Assistive Technology (AT) Network</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)</a></li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Persons who live in rural areas</a></p> <p>Also see <a href="#">CDC’s inclusive communication resource</a></p> <p>Examples of how SUAs have addressed in State Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacting state and local organizations serving each of the target populations to receive feedback on outreach opportunities and issues</li> <li>• Developing and requiring training for staff conducting outreach to the identified populations</li> <li>• In addition to establishing policies and procedures that require coordination between</li> </ul>

	<p>Title III services and Title VI Native American programs, the SUA provides state funding for outreach to Native American elders and family caregivers</p>
<p>Impacting social determinants of health of older individuals</p>	<p><a href="#">Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Department of Health and Human Services' SDOH site</a></p> <p>Examples of how SUAs have addressed in State Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt and implement a tool* to identify unaddressed social determinants of health (SDOH)/health-related social needs (HRSN) for Title III participants. Then, study results and plan services to enhance the response to address the SDOH/HRSNs of older individuals in the state or territory</li> <li>• Coordinate state aging plans with state plans, priorities and programs related to housing and transportation for older adults and state Medicaid waiver planning and implementation</li> <li>• Collaborate with public health and health systems completing community health needs assessments and community health improvement plans</li> </ul> <p>*Note: Several the organizations in the network use the <a href="#">AHC screening tool</a> from the Center for Medicare &amp; Medicaid Innovation (CMMI).</p>
<p>Ensuring meals can be adjusted for cultural considerations and preferences and providing medically tailored meals to the maximum extent practicable</p>	<p><a href="#">The National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging</a></p> <p><a href="#">CDC's Cultural Food Preferences in Food Service</a></p> <p>Example of how SUAs have addressed in State Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training for Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and providers on how to expand access to culturally and medically tailored meal options. Also, provide information to</li> </ul>

	<p>the public about multi-cultural experiences and meals offered through Title III services. Then, measure success of efforts by surveying Title III participants reporting access to culturally and medically tailored meals</p>
<p>Preparing, publishing, and disseminating educational materials on the health and economic welfare of older individuals</p>	<p><a href="#">ACL’s National Resource Centers</a></p> <p><a href="#">Social Vulnerability Index</a></p> <p>Example of how SUAs have addressed in State Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with key stakeholders to ensure every older person in the state or territory lives in a community that supports financial stability, secure housing, and reliable, affordable transportation. Then measure success by setting a goal to increase the median annual income of households with a householder over the age of 65 or an increase in the ability to access key benefits</li> </ul>
<p>Supporting cultural experiences, activities, and services, including in the arts</p>	<p><a href="#">Modernizing Senior Centers Resource Center for Professionals</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems</a></p> <p>Example of how SUAs have addressed in State Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with state’s arts commission to establish presence within AAAs’ congregate nutrition sites to support cultural experiences, activities, and services, including the arts. Then, evaluate the success of the program in that setting</li> </ul>
<p>Serving older adults living with HIV/AIDS</p>	<p><a href="#">ACL’s HIV/AIDS</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Resource Center on LGBT+ Aging</a></p> <p>Example of how SUAs have addressed in State Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting a focus group comprised of people living with HIV and the organizations that serve them (AIDS Service Organizations or ASOs) as part of its needs assessment. Then, using feedback from the focus group to create goals, objectives and strategies to</li> </ul>

	<p>increase the number of older individuals in the state living with HIV accessing Title III services</p>
<p>Supporting participant-directed/person centered planning for older adults and their caregivers across the spectrum of long-term services and supports, including home, community, and institutional settings</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>ACL's Person Center Planning</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems</u></a></p> <p>Example of how SUAs have addressed in State Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement and maintain person centered training for AAAs, provide AAAs with person centered planning tools and measure the number of AAAs using person centered planning tools effectively</li> </ul>